



ALEX PAUK
music director

FRIDAY, MARCH 7, 1986

ST. PAUL'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

TORONTO

ALEX PAUK, CONDUCTOR

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Friday, March 7, 1986

St. Paul's Anglican Church, Toronto

ESPRIT CONTEMPORAIN

ALEX PAUK, conductor

PROGRAMME

celebrating the American Society of University Composers Festival

THE UNANSWERED QUESTION (1908)

CHARLES IVES (U.S.A.)

MUSIC FOR A THOUSAND AUTUMNS (1983)*

ALEXINA LOUIE (Canada)

The Summoning

Ancient Music

Music for a Thousand Autumns

MIRAGES (1981)

JACQUES HÉTU (Canada)

Suite for Orchestra, Opus 34

Vision

Tourbillon

Hymne

Cortège

Final

Intermission

FRACTALS (1980)*

JAMES D. HOBBS, III (U.S.A.)

INTO THE DISTANT STILLNESS ... (1984)*

BRIAN CHERNEY (Canada)

ESPRIT CONTEMPORAIN gratefully acknowledges the generous support of
Suncor Inc., The Canada Council, Ontario Arts Council, Metro Toronto Cultural
Affairs Division, Yamaha Canada.

* selected by ASUC

● commissioned and premiered by ESPRIT CONTEMPORAIN, 1984.

ESPRIT CONTEMPORAIN

The ESPRIT CONTEMPORAIN orchestra was founded in 1983 by its conductor Alex Pauk, with the generous assistance of Suncor Inc., the Canada Council, and the National Youth Orchestra. Through a programme of commissioning, performing, and promoting new works by Canadian composers, this ensemble aims to develop a vital repertoire accessible to the majority of orchestras in Canada.

This unique venture provides composers an opportunity to receive much-needed exposure of their work and endeavours to give each piece the kind of adequate rehearsal time and care not usually afforded new and challenging orchestral music.

As a leading force in Canadian music the orchestra concluded its first phase of development with a concert at the International Society for Contemporary Music "World Music Days" (Toronto, September 1984). The orchestra's current season has included a highly successful tour to Quebec City and Montreal in December, 1985. The next and final concert of the ensemble's 1986 Spring series takes place Monday, April 28, 8:00 p.m. at the Premiere Dance Theatre, Harbourfront.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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ALEX PAUK has been a leading exponent of new music in Canada for the last 15 years. After graduating from the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music, he spent two years as a participant in the Ontario Arts Council's Conductor's Workshop, then proceeded to Tokyo for further studies at the Toho Gakuen School of Music.

Both as a composer and a conductor he has been deeply involved with bringing new music into being. In his role as a founding member of such groups as Array and Days, Months, and Years to Come, he developed the skills and philosophy which led to his starting ESPRIT CONTEMPORAIN as a primary force in the presentation of new Canadian music for orchestra.

Pauk has written music in a wide range of genres, including: concert music, film scores, radiophonic montages, and music theatre. Through his world-wide travels he not only brings diverse influences to his own creations but he is also able to search out music by foreign composers for presentation to Canadian audiences. At present Pauk lives in his native city, Toronto, and freelances as a composer and conductor when not engaged in the activities of ESPRIT CONTEMPORAIN. He currently holds the position of President of the Canadian League of Composers.

ESPRIT CONTEMPORAIN

Members of the Orchestra

Flute:	Douglas Stewart Christine Little
Oboe:	Alexandra Pohran Cynthia Steljes
Clarinet:	Gwilym Williams Greg James
Bassoon:	Jerry Robinson Paul Buttemer
Horn:	Harcus Hennigar Vincent Barbee
Trumpet:	Robert Grimm Andras Molnar
Percussion:	Michael Côté Bill Brennan
Piano:	Marc Widner
First Violin:	Marie Bérard (Concertmistress) Deborah Kirshner John Lowrie Ruth Fazal Nandor Szederkenyi Anna Maria Homer
Second Violin:	Diane Tait Valerie Gogovitz Fiona Huggett Anne Armstrong Jakov Lerner
Viola:	Douglas Perry Mary Carol Nuggent Sylvia Lange Arthur Jansen
Cello:	Henry van der Sloot Paul Widner Janet Kuschak Gregory Goldberg
Double Bass:	Joel Quarrington Roberto Occhipinti

The parts of the flute quartet may be taken by two flutes, upper staff, oboe and clarinet, lower staff. The trumpet part may be played by an English horn, an oboe or clarinet, if not playing in "The Answers." The string quartet or string orchestra (con sordini), if possible, should be "off stage", or away from the trumpet and flutes. The trumpet should use a mute unless playing in a very large room, or with a larger string orchestra. If more than four strings, a basso may play with the 'cellos (8va basso). The strings play ppp throughout with no change in tempo. They are to represent "The Silences of the Druids - Who Know, See and Hear Nothing." The trumpet intones "The Perennial Question of Existence", and states it in the same tone of voice each time. But the hunt for "The Invisible Answer" undertaken by the flutes and other human beings, becomes gradually more active faster and louder through an animando to a con fuoco. This part need not be played in the exact time position indicated. It is played in somewhat of an impromptu way; if there be no conductor, one of the flute players may direct their playing. "The Fighting Answerers", as the time goes on, and after a "secret conference", seem to realize a futility, and begin to mock "The Question" - the strife is over for the moment. After they disappear, "The Question" is asked for the last time, and "The Silences" are heard beyond in "Undisturbed Solitude."

(composer's note)

CHARLES IVES was a New England insurance executive who also happened to be one of America's first great modern composers. Further, even before Stravinsky and Schoenberg started tearing the music world apart with their innovations, Ives had created several works that are still regarded as wholly fresh and new.

Yet, only limited acclaim came to Ives during his lifetime (1874-1954), probably because his keenly individual music makes use of an exceedingly complex language of puns, vernacularisms and metaphors. His musical syntax ranges from microtones to tone-clusters, from trite harmony to dodecaphonic repetition. His advocates, including the composer Henry Cowell and the musicologist Nicolas Slonimsky, incessantly preached his merits, but these champions had little impact on the musical public. In the face of almost complete disinterest, Ives remained his own stubborn self, however, and it was this fact, no doubt, that was responsible for the few performances his music did receive during his lifetime. Ives could not have cared less. He was interested only in writing music, scrawling down notation on manuscripts which he then often carelessly piled in closets and drawers, and even in the barn of his Redding, Connecticut, home.

Those to whom Ives showed his music directly after it was written were aghast at its technical difficulties and were bewildered by its almost indecipherable notation. But this was part and parcel of Ives' conviction that freedom of creativity be matched by freedom of interpretation on the part of the performer. (His carefree attitude about notation, however, has resulted in much editorial labor in creating definitive editions of his works.)

Ives' music is a jigsaw of wildly differing musical materials. Hymnodic elements, patriotic tunes, parodies (both flippant and serious) of musical styles, early American pop tunes, folksy two-steps, ragtime -- all are found in his compositions. Dissonance is there also, and to Ives a chord amalgamating all twelve tones of the octave, plus fractional pitches in between, was just as pure and expressive as a simple triad.

As composers following Ives were soon to discover, his was not an arbitrary point of view, but a cold, hard, realistic fact. Ives, indeed, was a true visionary, and his visions soon came to be shared by many of the 20th century's most successful composers.

MUSIC FOR A THOUSAND AUTUMNS (1983)

ALEXINA LOUIE

Music For A Thousand Autumns was commissioned by la Société de musique contemporaine du Québec (SMCQ) with the assistance of the Canada Council. Having returned to Canada from my ten year stay in California only in 1980, I felt this was a particularly important commission as it was to be one of my first performances in Quebec. As a result, the first movement, The Summoning is a call to my creative energies. The second movement, Ancient Music, is based on Yearning On The River Shiang, an ancient Chinese melody written for the chin, a fretless zither, one of the oldest known Chinese instruments. During my years in California, I took lessons on this instrument at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) and this melody was the first piece I learned. The third movement, Music For A Thousand Autumns is a glimpse into the future and includes an extended cadenza for the piano. Several of the musical procedures in this movement are developed in my Concerto For Piano and Orchestra (1985). The three movements represent three time periods -- my present, past and future. On another more personal level, Music For A Thousand Autumns was written with composer Claude Vivier in mind. I began this piece just after his premature death, and as such the first movement is actually a call to Claude. His death made me think very carefully about the contribution of the artist to the world, and what exists after the artist dies. It became very clear to me through the writing of this piece that it is your music that exists long after you are gone.

(composer's note)

ALEXINA LOUIE, a native of Vancouver, British Columbia, received her early training at the University of British Columbia and completed graduate work as a Regent's Fellow at the University of California at San Diego where she studied with the American composers Pauline Oliveros and Robert Erickson. Since her return to Canada in 1980, her talents have been quickly recognized by her colleagues and have led her music to be performed frequently both here and abroad (England, Belgium, Holland, United States, and the Soviet Union) in concert and broadcasts, and have won for her numerous awards and commissions.

In the 1984-1985 season alone her string orchestra composition O Magnum Mysterium: In Memoriam Glenn Gould was performed by the Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver symphonies.

The 1985-1986 season is proving to be an extremely busy one with performances of Songs of Paradise scheduled by the Regina Symphony Orchestra, the Terra Haute Symphony Orchestra, and the National Arts Centre Orchestra. Also in this season, the Calgary Philharmonic has scheduled her string orchestra piece, and the National Arts Centre Orchestra will perform her Concerto For Piano and Orchestra. She is currently completing three new orchestral works which will be premiered this season: Music For A Celebration, an overture for the 10th Anniversary Celebration of Orchestra London Sinfonia (Canada), The Eternal Earth for the Toronto Symphony, and The Ringing Earth, an overture and fanfares for the opening gala of the Royal Bank Expo 86 World Festival. Alexina Louie currently resides in Toronto where she works as a free-lance composer.

MIRAGES (1981)
Orchestral Suite, Opus 34

JACQUES HÉTU

This orchestral suite was commissioned by the Quebec Youth Orchestra and is described by the composer as a paraphrase derived from various of his own earlier compositions. Fragments of these compositions turn up as quotations or transformations and represent a kind of retrospective of Hétu's work.

(composer's note)

Born in Trois-Rivières, Québec, JACQUES HÉTU studied with Clermont Pepin, Isabelle Delorme and Jean Papineau-Couture at the University of Ottawa. In 1959 he studied composition with Lukas Foss. In Paris in 1961 he studied with Henri Dutilleux and Olivier Messiaen, and won the Prix d'Europe, the first time it had been awarded since Henri Mercure in 1927. Because of his numerous and varied commissions, the composer continually adjusts his palette. This is seen particularly in the independent qualities of Cycle (1972), premiered by the Société de musique contemporaine du Québec, and the imposing vision of Les Djinns (1975), which is based on a poem by Victor Hugo. Although not one of the avant garde, Hétu possesses an imagination and sensitivity which make him one of Quebec's most appreciated composers.

"Fractals" is derived from the Latin word fractus which means to break. Perpetuating the process implies a continual breaking up. Recursion and fractionalizing are the first two concepts about this composition. If one continues to add, subtract, multiply or divide these musical fractions, an infinite variety of relationships will result. Since these relationships are usually in a constant state of flux, a third concept becomes important - forming.

In Fractals, pitch materials expand and contract between 5-note and 12-note collections; harmonies vary from simple dyads to total chromatic aggregates; rhythms change from long held notes to unmeasured tremolos and rapid flutter-tonguing. Consequently, the various compositional elements continually change yet exhibit progressive and recessive tendencies. It is these "tendencies" to form, break apart and re-form that bring about the "forming". A useful model for understanding this concept might be the way in which crystals behave - elements may be bonded together, broken apart, alternated, partially bonded, etc. Finally, the crystal model suggested the playing of glass crystals. This also implied the expansion of timbral possibilities for the ensemble. Orchestral members are required to play glass crystals, whistle and sing in addition to performing on their instruments.

Fractals was selected as the winning work for the 1985 Omaha Symphony Guild's New Music Competition. It was premiered on December 14, 1985, by the Omaha Symphony Chamber Orchestra, William Jenks conducting.

(composer's note)

JAMES HOBBS began his musical career as a pianist, appearing with the Fort Lauderdale Symphony Orchestra at the age of twelve. He continued his musical education at the Cleveland Institute of Music and Northwestern University. Among his honours are awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, American Music Center, National Federation of Music Clubs, Indiana State University and Northwestern University. His compositions have been played at various festivals and college campuses throughout the United States. His electronic works have been heard in concerts given by the International Computer Music Conference, International Electronic and Avant-garde Festival, Society for Electroacoustic Music in the United States, Chicago Society of Composers, and the Universities of Illinois and Iowa.

Dr. Hobbs has held teaching positions in composition and piano at the Cleveland Institute of Music, Morningside College, and Indiana University of Pennsylvania. He is currently employed as the Recorded Sound Services Assistant for Northwestern University's Music Library.

Into the Distant Stillness ... was commissioned by Esprit Contemporain through a grant from The Canada Council. The piece was written in the Spring of 1984 and premiered by Esprit Contemporain at the 1984 ISCM "World Music Days" in Toronto. Of the work, the composer writes:

"It is the third work I have recently written which bears the word "stillness" in its title (the others being In the Stillness Between for large wind and percussion ensemble and In the Stillness of the Seventh Autumn for solo piano). In the present work I have attempted in certain sections, to suggest a sense of direction or movement towards a hushed and still landscape, mysterious and perhaps even other-worldly in essence.

The sense of movement towards something distant is to some extent reflected in the seating arrangement of the orchestra: the woodwinds are divided into two quartets, one of which is situated behind the orchestra and therefore more distant from the listener."

(composer's note)

Composer and teacher BRIAN CHERNEY was born in Peterborough, Ontario, in 1942. He studied piano with Margaret Miller Brown and Jacques Abram and composition with Samuel Dolin and John Weinzweig in Toronto. He taught theory and composition at the University of Victoria 1971-72 and began teaching the same subjects at McGill University in Montreal in 1972. His extensive writings include a biography of Harry Somers (1975). Dr. Cherney's early compositions are doctrinaire, using the 12-tone system to discipline a dense polyphonic texture. His recent works have continued to seek a reconciliation of serial procedures and visual or spatial concepts which bend or interrupt them. In 1979 his String Trio tied for top position on the International Rostrum of Composers' list of recommended works. In 1985 he was awarded the Jules Léger Prize for composition.